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SUBJECT: DIWANIYAH PRT: GOVERNOR REACHES OUT TO PRT

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Greg D'Elia for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

This is a Diwaniyah PRT reporting cable.

¶1. (C) Summary: During a January 30 meeting with PRToffs, Diwaniyah Governor Al-Khudari stressed that he wants to improve cooperation between his government, coalition forces and the PRT and would like to see more private, particularly U.S., investment in the province. He focused on the needs of his province and his views on economic revival and reconstruction. End Summary

¶2. (C) On January 30, PRT Team Leader (as well as former PRT Leader who was along to make introductions) and PRToffs traveled to Diwaniyah for the MND CS change-of-command ceremony for newly arrived Major-General Andrej Malinowski. The next day, we met with Al-Khudari, the Governor of Qadisiyah.

A Question of Honor

¶3. (C) The meeting began with the Governor visibly upset that the event could not take place in his office, as originally agreed. Comment: The Governor would not allow a security sweep of the government building in Diwaniyah, but agreed to meet in MND CS Headquarters conference room at Camp Echo. As the host, the Governor said that he could not allow U.S. security to sweep the government building; &It,s about dignity and respect.8 End Comment.

¶4. (C) The Governor, who has not enjoyed a warm relationship with coalition forces, welcomed Major-General Andrej Malinowski, the new MND CS commander. Although previously there had been &some difficulties,8 the Governor emphasized to Malinowski that he wants a good relationship and wishes to cooperate with coalition forces. He added that he also invites Polish companies to invest in Diwaniyah and mentioned that he would soon visit the Polish Ambassador in Baghdad.

¶5. (C) Al-Khudari extended again an invitation for Ambassador Crocker to visit Diwaniyah and stressed that he is willing to visit the Ambassador in Baghdad.

Focus on Economic Development

¶6. (C) The Governor also invited U.S. companies to invest in Diwaniyah. He said that Diwaniyah suffers from electricity outages, a lack of water stations, substandard housing, and fuel shortages. &We need assistance with these projects.8

¶7. (C) Al-Khudari recognizes that small projects alone will not allow Diwaniyah to prosper. U.S. and GOI aid alone is not enough to help Diwaniyah recover but rather private foreign company investment is required.

18. (C) Comment: Despite the rocky beginning, the meeting, which included the PRDC chief and three members of his engineering team, is evidence that the Governor is reaching out and wants to be able to show that he is trying to develop Diwaniyah,s economy. He appears to genuinely want more cooperation and will make the necessary concessions in order to host future meetings at the Governorate. Consistent with his emphasis on cooperation, he did not mention the tribally organized Agricultural Union,s distribution of seeds and fertilizer, which he considers illegal under Iraqi law and a potential power base for his political opponents in the province. End Comment.
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